

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Asheville Gay and Lesbian
Information Line:
253-2971
Funded by a Resist grant

To report
discrimination or
violence:
SALGA Documentation Project:
253-1656
U. S. Dept. Of Justice toll-free:
1-800-457-HATE

Asheville, NC

Serving the WNC Gay/Lesbian Community

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What's wrong with this?

Members of SALGA wanted to see for themselves what an Adopt-A-Highway sign with SALGA's name on it would look like.



SALGA Sues NCDOT

by Cynthia Janes

The Southern Appalachian Lesbian and Gay Alliance (SALGA) filed suit in federal court December 12 in Raleigh against the Secretary and the Director of the Beautification Programs of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), for violating members' US and NC Constitutional rights to free speech, free association, and equal protection of the laws. Named as defendants are Thomas J. Harrelson, Secretary of the NCDOT, and Betsy J. Powell, Director of Beautification Programs of the NCDOT. Named as plaintiff along with SALGA is Teri Gibbs, current Chair of SALGA.

The suit describes the Complaint as follows: "This action arises from the defendants' refusal to permit the plaintiffs to participate fully in the North Carolina Department of Transportation Adopt-A-Highway Program because of the nature and purpose of the plaintiff organization and the content of its members' beliefs concerning the rights of gay and lesbian citizens of this state. The plaintiffs seek declaratory and injunctive relief and damages for the denial by the defendants of their basic fundamental rights to free association and expression of their beliefs and to freedom from discrimination because of the exercise of their rights as secured by the First and Fourteenth

Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, and Article I, Secs. 14 and 19 of the Constitution of North Carolina." (SALGA and Gibbs v. Harrelson and Powell, p.2)

On June 22, eight months after SALGA applied to the Adopt-A-Highway program, the NCDOT responded, stating that SALGA could participate in the program, but could not identify their stretch of highway because to do so might endanger them and others. SALGA refused those terms, stating that this was blatant discrimination, and asked that the DOT reconsider. When the DOT did not respond, SALGA's attorney, Robert Elliot, with sponsorship of the NC Civil Liberties Union (NCCLU), again requested reconsideration.

The NCDOT notified SALGA's attorney, through the NC Attorney General, that the NCDOT "would not change its decision denying SALGA

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Gay Father Reunited With Daughter

by Earl Willis

Every now and then a special Christmas comes along so filled with love, joy and gratitude that it is stored in never-to-be-forgotten memory.

Our friend Bill Allen will no doubt have that kind of Christmas this year, as well as a 1990 which will be forever etched in treasured memory. After 20 years of waiting, Bill will get to deliver Christmas presents to his daughter.

It was on his daughter's first Christmas and during an unpleasant separation and divorce that Bill first tried to bring her Christmas presents. "I was stopped at a safe distance from the house where my ex-wife lived with our daughter, and was told I could only leave



Bill and his daughter, together at last.

the presents in the yard," Bill explained. He elected not to leave them at all, because he knew they would be dumped; instead, he stored them in his sister's attic.

That would be as close as Bill would get to his daughter for the next 20 years. The following year the presents, like the relationship with his daughter, went up in smoke when his sister's house was destroyed by fire.

Economics and discouragement drove Bill away from that small, rural, fundamentalist, southern county where he was born and educated. It also drove him away from his daughter.

But in an old trunk he kept two precious items: "a tiny little pink hair clasp and a green plastic toy duck." On the toy duck was the imprint of a child's dirty little hand.

It was following the divorce that Bill for the first time faced his gay nature. He moved to a western state seeking employment and others of his own kind. He found part of what he was looking for, but not a job.

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JANUARY 25 Deadline for Your Story

If you have faced harassment, discrimination, or violence in 1990 in Buncombe County, and have not yet reported it to the Documentation Project, we need you! PLEASE call the Documentation Project at 253-1656 to tell your story.

Incidents will be compiled statewide January 26-27. Why wait? Call now!

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